

Youthquake Ahead

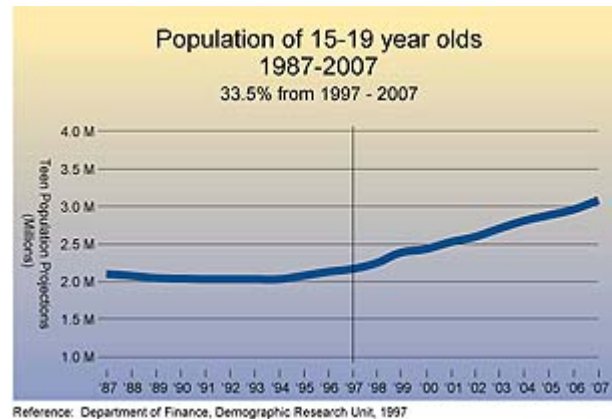
In August 1997, the California Coalition Against Driving Under the Influence (CaDUI) and the California Office of Traffic Safety commissioned a statistical and demographic analysis of the potential impact of "Generation Y" on the safety of California roadways. The following are key findings from that study.

A teen "Youthquake" is headed for California roadways

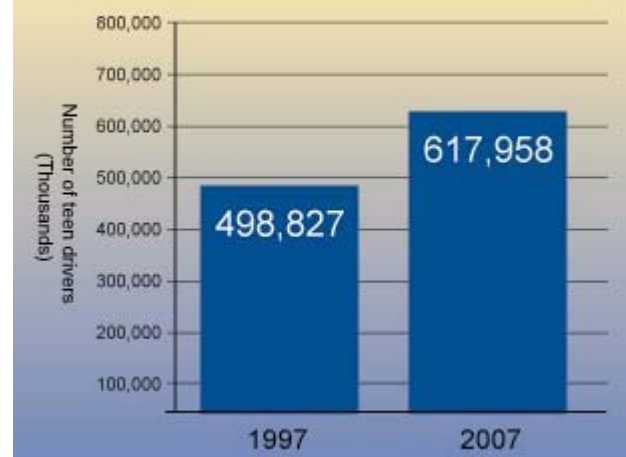
A teenage "youthquake" of proportions not seen since the baby boom is rippling across California. The state's driving teen population, 15-19 years of age, will increase 33.5 percent within the next ten years due to:

- The Baby Boom echo — more than half the increase is attributable to children born to the Baby Boom generation, many of whom delayed child-bearing. These children born between 1980 to 1993 are often referred to as Generation Y.
- High levels of immigration by predominantly young families.
- High birth rates among African-Americans, Hispanics and other minorities.

California's teen population will increase by a third over the next ten years



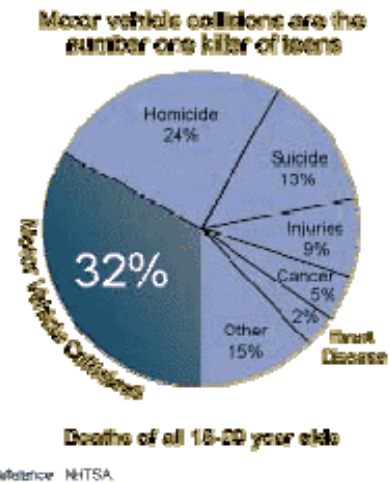
A quarter more driving 15-17 year olds by 2007



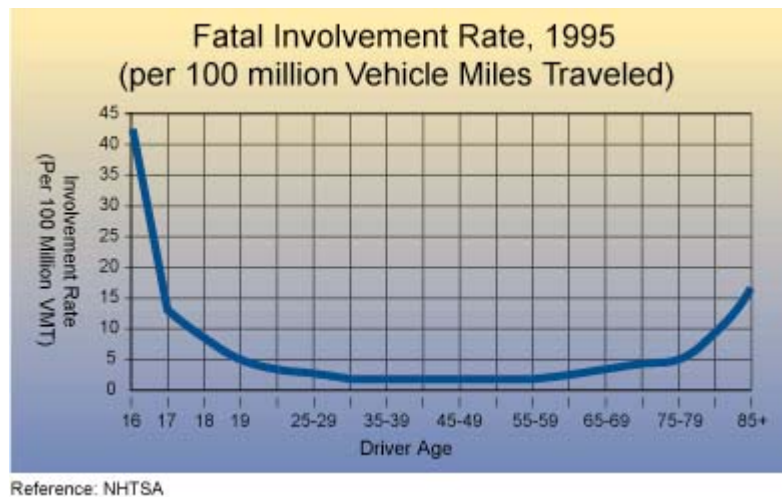
Teens are high risk drivers

Teenagers are involved in far more motor vehicle collisions than any other age group, and are much more likely to be killed or injured. When teen drivers are involved in a collision they are usually at fault. Lack of experience and a general tendency towards high risk behavior by young males are primary causes.

In 1995 California teens comprised 6.3 percent of the population, but were involved in 12.5 percent of all fatal and injury crashes.



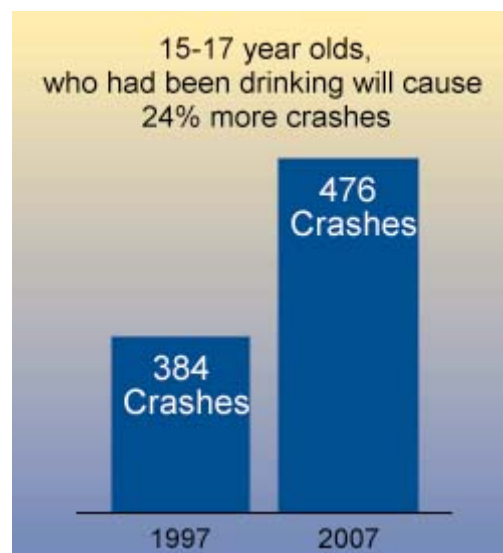
Nationally, 16 year old drivers had the highest rate of involvement in fatal crashes more than 42 deaths per 100 million miles driven compared to less than 2 deaths per 100 million miles for drivers between 30 and 50 years of age. California's 16 year olds are at fault in more than 66 percent of the crashes they are involved in.



Alcohol use by teen drivers is an especially deadly mix. More than a third of all motor vehicle-related teen deaths involve alcohol.

Generation Y means more teen drivers

California's youth population is exploding. By 2007 there will be a 33.5% increase in teens 15-19 years of age, a level not seen since the 1980s. The leading edge of Generation Y has already reached driving age. Each year for the next decade there will not only be more teens on California roadways, but they will comprise a larger proportion of the overall driving population.



More drivers, more crashes

The vastly increasing number of high risk teen motorists will impact traffic safety. A recent study commissioned by the California Office of Traffic Safety and the California Coalition Against DUI (CaDUI) projects that 15-17 year old drivers will be involved in approximately 2,000 more crashes in the year 2007 than in 1997.

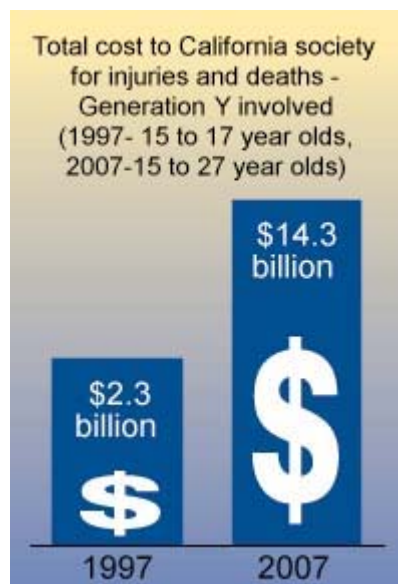
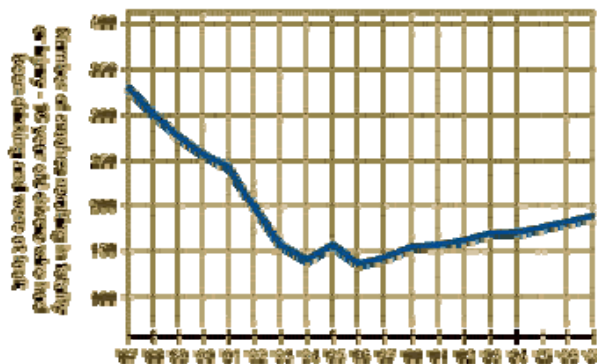
Deaths and injuries caused by underaged drinking and driving are also expected to increase significantly as more teens get behind the wheel.

The high cost to California

The human cost of young deaths is tragic and immeasurable. But more deaths, injuries and collisions also mean increased costs to California society. Lost productivity, medical care, insurance costs, property damage, emergency care and funeral expenses all add up.

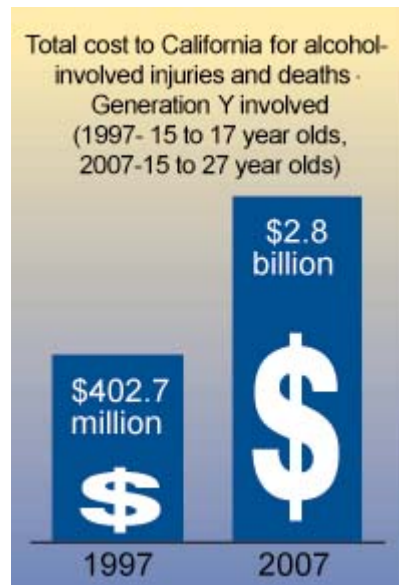
In 1997, when only the first teens of Generation Y have become drivers, the cost to California for crashes resulting in injury or death will be \$2.3 billion. This cost will increase each year and is projected to reach \$14.3 billion in 2007, when the entire generation is of driving age. The cost for alcohol-involved crashes will increase from \$402.7 million to \$2.8 billion during the same period.

Deaths and injuries caused by 16 year old drivers who had been drinking are expected to increase



A huge impact

As large numbers of high risk teen drivers take to California roadways public safety will be effected. California's traffic safety statistics have improved significantly over the past decade, due in part to new laws requiring seat belt usage, motorcycle helmet use, and tougher anti-DUI laws and enforcement. However, it appears statistically inevitable that — absent action to address the issue of teen motorists — the state will see an unfortunate and significant increase in collisions, injuries and deaths, and that California roadways will be a more dangerous place for drivers of all ages.



The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS)

The California Office of Traffic Safety is charged with reducing fatalities, injuries and economic losses resulting from motor vehicle crashes through administration of the California Highway Safety Plan.

The California Coalition Against Driving Under the Influence (CaDUI)

The California Coalition Against DUI is an ad hoc group of private sector, government, law enforcement and safety advocates. Funding is provided from corporate sponsorships and a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety.



For more information or to request copies of the [full report](#), contact Mike Marando, OTS, at mmarando@ots.ca.gov.